



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Wednesday, August 3, 2022 3-4:30 pm

Present:

Joining virtually: Wendell Talley, Dr. Jonathan Whitfield, Aaron Sewell; in person Whitney Smith McIntosh.

Absent:

Dr. Baba-Singhri, Rosalind Peebles Fox

Staff: Monica Stone, Kim Cheeks, Maria Guevara

Meeting was called to order at 3:21 p.m. by Commissioner Talley, chair Dr. Baba- Singhri was not available.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes from April 28, 2022 and June 30, 2022 was made by Smith McIntosh. It was seconded by Dr. Whitfield.

Reports:

The latest financial report for the Department was shared with the Commissioners. Monica Stone reports the budget has stayed consistent. However it's about a 10% deficit as expenses increase; salaries, utilities, travel costs for outreach and commission expenses. Some divisions receive federal and grant programs to help. However for the Community Advocacy and Services division that is not the case. Two positions have been removed because of the budget. Some executive officers are working with two offices.

Stone is working with a multi-agency incubator program helping local churches create their own 501(c)(3) Organizations. The Department is also working with cities who are interested in

setting up their own human rights commissions. Mason City is interested in this endeavor. A city over 29,000 does need to have a civil rights commission. A human rights commission is not required for cities. However, many need help setting up IRS, State filings and fiscal planning. Hewlett Packard is offering some grant opportunities to cities for this project.

Office:

Kim Cheeks explained her report is attached. She had asked the coordinator for the youth justice council to come to speak to commissioners but today's date did not work. Kim will look for a future date. She is working on finalizing the Women's Hall of Fame arrangements. More information about the end of August event will be released soon.

Commissioner's Reports:

Whitney attended some post Roe vs Wade discussions and how the laws affect each state differently, including socio-economic issues. There was a block party on MLK Pkwy hosted by the Friendship Center. While she was unable to attend, the event had good reviews.

Dr Whitfield reports Blank Park Zoo has an philanthropy program focused on helping minority children attend the zoo. 50 children were able to attend recently. Dr. Whitfield is glad a program like this exists for children to have an educational and fun opportunity. He also shared some details about the Iowa Missionary and Educational Baptist State Convention which will be held on August 15-17, 2022. He reports he will be giving an address on August 15 and we are invited to attend.

Sewell does not have anything to share.

Talley reports he has been unable to attend community events as he has traveled out of state to be with family who are navigating health issues.

The group asked about creating a Facebook page but with records request laws, maintenance of records is difficult to keep up to date. The group decided it's not a feasible idea at this time.

Orientation:

Commissioners were presented with a short orientation in regards to their position expectations and new administrative changes. Key highlights include a biennial status report and recommendations to address key needs and areas of focus for their communities need to be submitted by October 15 of every even numbered year.

There are two required offices – Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. To qualify to serve as an officer, a commissioner must have at least two years remaining in their term. One member will be appointed to the Department of Human Rights Board. By October 1 each year, the commission shall establish and make public an annual schedule of required meetings for the following calendar year. These new changes are from administrative code 421.

Representative Charles Isenhardt:

State representative Isenhardt spoke on an initiative to create policy related to environmental justice. Iowa does not have any environmental justice policies. Smith McIntosh suggested not using the word justice instead use the word access. Sometimes the word justice has been used in reference to punishing or taking away something. Commissioners reported that they would be in it interested in hearing next steps.

Public Comment: None was made

Vote for the Vice Chair:

Smith McIntosh asked to be considered for the position. Talley motioned for approval, seconded by Sewell.

Meeting dates:

The group discussed which dates would be the best. All expressed Wednesday works well for them. Talley motioned for approval to move tentative dates to one day prior. This was seconded by Sewell. Meeting dates will be October 26, 2022, January 25, 2023 and June 28, 2023 from 3 to 5PM.

Motion to adjourn was made by Talley, Dr. Whitfield seconded.

5:10 p.m. meeting adjourned.